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The Gospel of the Earth

by
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The sorrow of men was great in those days, for their love was dead.
Men and women competed for money and prestige.
Therefore they bred soulless children: children came into the world from one mother's womb as strangers.
Brothers and sisters did not say to one another: You are my blood and my flesh - for they were not conceived of love.
And the Earth mourned and her crops languished, because it grieved her in her womb to nourish food for soulless men. -
In those days a hermit lived in the woods of the village of Vicarino, named Theogenes.
He lived holy before his God and knew nothing of the wickedness of men; he knew only of the goodness of the trees and the birds that dwelt in them.
He had never known a woman; he was chaste according to the strictness of his Christian doctrine.
But his heart within him prayed to the Earth for creative love, and his mind knew it not.
And while he meditated in the woods of Vicarino, he mourned the sadness of the Earth.
He felt how the Earth lamented, because it pained her to provide nourishment for soulless people.
And it came to pass, while he was still slumbering on an early summer morning,

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That he was awakened by the kiss of a beautiful woman.
And Theogenes, seeing her, was terrified. But the woman said to him,
'Fear not, Theogenes, the prayer of your heart has been answered; I will be your wife, and you shall create a daughter and call her Charis , that is, Love .
She will be great among the children of men, for she will be born of love.
She will free humanity from powerless love- desire.'
But Theogenes said to her: 'How shall this be, since I am not allowed to know my wife?'
The woman replied, 'And what you yourself have created, will you let it die without fruit?
I am the child of your sacred heart's prayer. Must my heart pray, unanswered?'
But Theogenes said: 'How shall I understand this, and how shall I know whether thou art an angel or a devil?'
The woman replied: 'Leave the forests of Vicarino and visit the cities of the world.
Then you will see the great sorrow of men, for their love is dead.

Men and women mate for money and prestige,
That is why they breed soulless children: children come into the world from one mother's womb as strangers.
Brothers and sisters do not say to each other: you are my blood and my flesh - for they were not conceived of love.
And that is why the Earth and its crops languish, because it grieves in her womb to nourish food for soulless people.
Your heart has mourned the great sadness of the Earth, but your mind did not understand it.'
Then Theogenes thought of the tears he wept, and knew not why.
He said: 'I will go to the people of the cities of the world and see whether you speak the truth.
But tell me first: who are you who have seen my weeping?' The woman looked at him lovingly and replied:

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'Your heart has become pure far from people who mate for money and prestige.
Your sadness was a pure prayer to the Earth, for pure, creative love.
And what is pure and feels with the Earth, it will not continue to long for in vain.
Thus the seed dwells in the womb of the Earth, sympathizing with it and striving to blossom, day and night,
And the fruit rises from the tender embrace of Earth and seed.
But the seed does not know what fruit will arise from it.
He waits in the darkness and does nothing but pure desire and compassion for life on Earth.
Thus has your heart waited in darkness and woe, and behold, this night I, your fruit, have ripened.'
But Theogenes said: 'A child grows slowly in his mother's womb,
How were you suddenly born as a woman?'
The woman replied, 'You have believed in a thousand miracles, and this miracle you do not believe?
But it is no wonder what you are seeing now.
Slowly I have grown through the deep love desires of your heart.
From earth and air, from your tears and your heart's blood, your love desires have woven my nerves and muscles and flesh.
Invisible were your desires for love, but they were strong as invisible storm winds.
And you did not understand your sighs: so an artist does not understand his own mysterious creations.
His heart makes him an artist and creator - and who understands the fathomless mysteries of a human heart?
But if his work has grown from an unfathomable fear of life, then the artist says: it is good, my heart, I am satisfied.
So say you also: 'It is good, my heart, I am satisfied.'
Theogenes hesitated and asked: 'Where were you then, when my heart's desires were molding you?'

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The woman replied: 'In spheres that your human eye cannot yet see.
A living work always grows to greater wisdom than its creator - that is why

thinking man has grown from unsightly slime after many thousands of years.
But he who loves fervently lives long. Your heart has lived creating for many, many centuries. - Therefore I, the fruit of your heart, am much wiser than you.
Go now to the people of the cities of the world and question your hearts and diligently investigate whether I have spoken the truth.′
Then Theogenes trusted the beautiful woman, and together they left the woods of Vicarino.
Very soon Theogenes learned to see what every ordinary person knew in those days:
That men and women mated for money and prestige, and bred soulless children, that children were born as strangers from one mother′s womb.
But he felt how the Earth mourned for the people, and he now knew why.
He also now knew that his heart had long been praying to the Earth for creative love.
He returned to the woods of Vicarino, and mated with the woman of his heart.
He gave birth to a daughter, and they called her name Charis.
They received her with joy. But the woman admonished: ′All who do not know the Earth will hate and persecute this child.
Therefore do not speak to anyone about this child until she becomes a woman and preaches the Gospel of the Earth.′

* * *

But while his wife slept, it happened that Theogenes saw the first smile of his dear child.
He was deeply moved and felt the Earth rejoice in his mind.
He wept tenderly and with his tears sweet words welled up from his heart, the ripe words that had blossomed in him for so long, misunderstood:

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′My soul praises our all Mother, dear Earth,
And my breast swells with holy joy of creation,
For my humble body might tremble under the jubilation of love.
From henceforth I will be blessed and bless all the children of men.
As my humble heart has been recreated, so shall the whole world be recreated.
Now I know that the Earth is alive and powerful and full of love.
Her purifying fire will burn from generation to generation in all who know her.
It will destroy the proud, and all their folly will perish.
And she will inspire all humility to invincible creative power. People can love again and breed smiling loving children.′

Theogenes, full of emotion, walked out of the woods to the peasants of Vicarino, who honored him for his holiness.

He forgot his wife′s admonition, and in the houses and on
the roads he proclaimed his mighty joy:
′A child has been born to me, a love child and her name is
Charis.
She is my heart-child and the heart-child of my wife and
the heart-child of the Earth.′

When Theogenes saw that no one understood him, he
called the people together and said:
′Men and women of Vicarino! You honored me and
believed that I was orthodox in life.
Now listen carefully: I must tell you the truth that concerns
you, you and your children, even to your descendants.
I see that your eyes are dull, and your gait is slow, as if you carry life like a
heavy burden.
And your children are as poor in zest for life as you are - must your
offspring drag their lethargy into your remotest offspring?
You are unhappy, but you do not understand your misfortune; let me
explain it to you.
I have visited the cities of the world and seen the great misery of the
people:

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They can no longer love and buy false kisses for money and decency,
Some women sell their bodies for their entire lives, others rent themselves
out per night.
Some men pay the women with money, others pay her with a significant
marriage.
But they can no longer mate for love.
And to cover the shame of their poverty of love, they have invented all
kinds of honorable things.
Honorable is their skill in talking and skill in lying, honorable in fighting
and skill in killing,
Yes, the lack of warm love has become honorable among people.
But they have invented all honor to cover the shame that they can no longer
love.
And if they did not keep themselves shiny and colorful and graceful and
flexible with means unknown to you, peasants of Vicarino - their eyes
would be even duller than yours and their gait would be even slower.
For in silence their hearts are deeply ashamed and mourn bitterly, while
their mouths boast of preserved honor.
I saw all that when I visited the world′s cities.
And then I understood why such great sadness came over me when I
meditated in your woods.
Look at the Earth you cultivate: it is the mother of us all and must provide
food for unloving people.
Do you think that the earth does not feel that and does not mourn for it?
The Earth lives like you and I: naturalists have seen its nerves and its blood
circulation and its heartbeat.
The Earth lives as you and I: I felt that when I reflected in your forests.
And I suffered the sadness of the Earth, because I was her child, trusted

her - because my heart could love and beat with creative urge like hers.
Oh, that you too might know that blessed sadness!
Then you would reverently sow and plow and reap, and the Earth would bless you with holy creative urge -
But the poison of all manner of modesty has also poisoned you.

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You also lift up your eyes to heaven and boast of your honor, while your heart is ashamed.
That is why your eyes are dull and your gait is so slow and you mate with less love than your cattle.
But do not despair: the Earth is good and full of forgiveness. Reconcile with the Earth, mother of all.
And again you will be able to live and love and breed laughing children of love.'

The peasants looked at each other and some said, "Our good brother Theogenes has gone mad."
But others thought: 'He no longer speaks according to the old faith, because he has said nothing about God.'
And others claimed, 'He is a prophet.'
Most of them, however, were cautious and said: 'We will ask our pastor what we should do.'
But Theogenes remembered his child's first smile and hurried back to the woods.

* * *

Theogenes told his wife what he had said to the peasants of Vicarino.
But she became very serious and said:
'You have done wrong, Theogenes, to speak of all this to husbandmen.
For the husbandmen know least of all the sorrows and the joys of the Earth.
They know the signs of the clouds, which tell them good weather or bad weather for the produce of the fields.
They know the fatness of their fields, and know which ground bears rich vegetables, and which many ears of corn.
They demand the fruits of the Earth only for their stomachs, not for their souls. They do not see what beauty the Earth has, and do not feel how she lives her own life.
Therefore the Earth is least affectionate to husbandmen, and gives them dull senses and clumsy hearts.
Beware of the husbandmen and do not speak to them of the sorrows and the joys of the Earth - then they will become angry and say: rather speak to us of fat and poor soil.'

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The following morning, Theogenes walked in the woods and pondered the words of his wife.
And he met the gray soul shepherd of Vicarino, who had been his faithful friend for many years.
Great astonishment came over his face when he saw the calm countenance of Theogenes, and he said:

‘My dear friend, there is much talk about you in the village, and many have turned against you.

They say that you have dishonored a woman and fathered an illegitimate child.’
Much wonder has happened to me in the quiet woods of Vicarino.
Then the old man′s face brightened, and he said:
‘Now peace can again descend into my soul, which has been tormented for many years.
Theogenes answered: ‘My child′s name is Charis, which means Love - she is the child of my heart and the child of my wife’s heart.
My heart has grieved with longing for creative love - and now it is joyful because it has created.
I wanted to remain silent, but I forgot myself when I saw the first smile of my heart’s child.’

You are a saint, and no evil can dwell in your heart anymore - in your eyes, I see again the purity of the trees and birds.
I have knowledge of eyes, that comes from my white hairs. Blessed, blessed are your eyes!
I, too, have often wept from a painful emptiness of heart, and my heart has grown old in remorse.
For I felt guilty because I often mourned in lonely chastity.
Many priests have I confessed my fears to, and none could comfort me: the priest’s words of forgiveness did not touch my soul.
But you look at me with holy eyes and say: there is forgiveness even for the sinner who mourns with longing for creative love.
Now I can stand before my God without shame, and before my holy friend.’

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But he childishly continued to believe in the power of priests and Christian duties; he kindly said to Theogenes:
‘You surely have not yet received the sacrament of confession. Kneel down: it is easy to confess to me now, as I already know your sins; let me bless you so that God may grant you grace.’

Theogenes, moved, kissed the hands of his old friend; he knelt down and allowed himself to be blessed.
Then the gray soul shepherd was satisfied. But he warned Theogenes:
‘Be cautious of the farmers of Vicarino.
Their saints are their greatest pride, and they forgive their saints nothing; they are stricter than God.’
And they parted like two children who had just formed a friendship. -

Theogenes spoke to his wife about the soul shepherd’s warning. She frowned and said:
‘I expected this; people are cruel and unreliable, especially those who do not know the joys and sorrows of the Earth.
They are doubly cruel and doubly unreliable if they are the Earth’s spoiled children, privileged to live amidst its greatest beauty.

We cannot stay here, Theogenes, for the sake of our beloved child: Charis would not be safe living among coarse people.

We shall go to a big city, into voluntary exile,
Until our little daughter has grown into a woman, with the Earth in her heart and a holy desire for the Earth's Kingdom.
Then she will speak words of repentance and life to the people who are estranged from the loving heart of their mother.'

When the day of departure came, Theogenes and his wife were very sad.
And Theogenes said: 'The vanity of people has driven me from my beloved woods.
Here, their living eyes have been dulled by the splendor of glittering holy images of saints,

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there, their glorious bodies shine in glittering gold and shimmering silk.
How all human honor has degenerated into the modesty of money and phantoms of saints!
But one day Mother will touch the hearts of men and proclaim their humanity,
And you, dear child, will be her Apostle.′ -
In silence they left their dear woods of Vicarino.

II
Inspired Matter.

Charis grew up in beauty and wisdom, hidden from people. When she became a woman, her parents died a short time apart, and she was left without relatives.
There was great sorrow in her heart for the death of her father and mother,
But also great joy, because she felt the Earth rejoicing within her: prepare yourself, my Charis, now you will be my Apostle.
And she went to the silent woods of Vicarino and hid herself there for many days - for in holy silence alone speaks the loud voice of the Earth.
And this the Earth said to her:
′My Charis, people have forgotten that the Earth is alive. They talk about spiritualities, because they no longer know the glories of animate matter.
Because they murdered my cleanest fabric with stamps of money.
Corpses of murdered matter that was once animated and alive: these are their shining coins, money and with them they buy love.
Once all thinkers knew how to honor animate matter.
Oh, when those ancient thinkers pondered, the first, whose thoughts were found worthy by the rigors of Time, to continue to shine through all the ages!
People now call those ancients naive, because to them everything was water or air or earth or fire.
But to them all matter was animated natural matter.

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Didn′t Master Thales say that the stones too are full of soul and that

everything is full of divine life?
And now all inspiration has died to lifeless money.
But, my dear Charis, the Ancients revive again in their youngest children.
Once again the song swells in the realms of human thought: Alleluia, even the stones live.
Who can sing along to that jubilant song of life?
Those who keep their inspiration, their love, far away from money and everything that can be bought with counted cents.
They will learn to live and love to the tips of their fingers. Their love of soul and body will be one mighty life.
For all matter is animated that is not cold to money. Blessed are the people who can love again far from the moribund cold of money.
Where is the woman who dares to say: whatever she can buy, my love cannot be bought for tons of gold!
Blessed be that woman, for she gives the Earth new life. Where is the man who can say: and if I die without love, I would not want paid love!
Blessed be that man, for he gives the Earth new life. Where are the children born from the creation embrace of living, loving people!
Blessed, blessed, those children! They fill the Earth again
with animated matter.
Give birth, mothers, give birth to children of love! That their eyes sparkle with life,
That their mouths laugh with life,
That their hands wave with life,
That their feet skip with the floating step of life. Give birth, mothers, give birth to children of love!'

Soul-sensuality.

Charis went from city to city, proclaiming the good news of the Earth, teaching the glories of animate matter.

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But the spiritual teachers, seeing that many were listening to her words, warned their flocks:
'Charis is a materialist and very sensual, for she despises all spiritual things.'
And they delivered very learned arguments and edifying sermons about spirit and matter.
Then many who listened to Charis became confused and said:
'The learned say that you despise the spirit. We want to know if they speak the truth.'

Charis replied:
'Have the wisest sages ever been able to tell us what spirit is and what matter is?
And have the wisest sages not taught us that spirit and matter are one?
How then shall I honor the spirit if I despise matter?
But I know why their cunning intellect must contradict me.
The intellect does not love, and therefore it cannot distinguish lies from truth.

The intellect only understands, and just as understandable as the truth is, so too is the lie.
The creative heart, however, loves, and the lie is not as lovable as the truth.
He who loves knows the truth. And only the creative heart can love.
They accuse me of being sensual because I want to see the spirit in matter.
But they must find their senses very important, who know nothing better to do than to restrain them.
I do not find my senses so important.
Do you know what is important?
What is important is what is eternal, and all things are multicolored acts of one eternity.
Therefore, everything is equally important, and because everything is equally important, nothing is important.
This the royal soul of every person knows, and that is why it plays.
What else would it do with unimportant things but play?

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This is the nature of souls: to play with what belongs to the senses, with swirling lines, with colors that laugh and ponder, with tones that rejoice and mourn.
This play is her sensuality, her soul′s sensuality.
This play is beautiful and powerful because it is Love. This is how Adam and Eve played when they were naked and not yet ashamed from fear of being insignificant.
This is how all humble souls play.
Do not make laws for her play, soulless imitators of great spirits, who hide your emptiness under weighty robes.
Do not say that this is allowed and that is forbidden in the blissful soul′s play—for you cannot play.
You are too unhappy, too empty, and too proud to be like a child, who plays.'

From that time on, many stopped listening to Charis, for they had always heard important things said about human souls, and play is not important.
But those who remained faithful to her began to praise her less and love her more.

And Charis was happier than before.

Living Purity.

The spiritual teachers noticed that many no longer came to listen to Charis, because she did not proclaim anything important about human souls.
They smiled their well-satisfied smiles and nodded contentedly.
And they said to one another: ′Now we must appeal to chastity, then Charis will lose even more young followers. After all, chastity is held in public esteem.′
And when Charis spoke again about the glories of the spirited matter, an elder, respected by respectable people, questioned her:
′You speak quite nicely about things that simple people do not

understand. But your listeners want to know one thing for sure: tell us, what do you think of chastity?′

Charis replied:
′Praised be the chastity of you and your friends!
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What else is your chastity but shame over the nakedness of your body? And well do you to be ashamed of your body′s nakedness. For your body is soulless and disgusting to all who can see the life of the soul. I see no soul laughing in the laughter of your mouth. I see no soul crying in the tears of your eyes. I feel no soul trembling in the grasp of your hand. Your body eats and drinks like cattle, but no soul-life trembles in your nerves, muscles, and flesh. You are disgusted by the carcasses of animals that rot once animal life has departed. But my soul is disgusted by your body, for all human life has departed from it. As the carcasses of animals appear to you, so your bodies appear as corpses to my soul. Praised be the shame of you and your friends! Bury your body and bind it tightly in thick clothing: for I see rotting in your flesh.'

When Charis had spoken thus, many felt offended and left her; Charis said to those who remained loyal:
'Let them go: they are corpses drifting away from the current of our soul-life. If they stayed with us, our souls would suffocate in the stench of their rotting.'

Then a pale man with serious thinking eyes asked:
'What is the soul?'

And she answered:
'There was once a scholar who wanted to know what light was. He had seen the sun rise over fields and meadows and had seen the crops of the Earth shining in the beauty of light. But his heart was not satisfied, because his mind could not understand what light was. Therefore, he shut himself up in a dark cave and pondered day and night: what is light? And he did not want to see the light again until he understood it. He suspected much about the nature of light; but
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the more he speculated, the more unsatisfied his mind became, the more discontented his heart grew. But after years of pondering, when he left his cave, exhausted from contemplation, he had gone blind. And the Earth said to him: 'I had given you eyes to see the light, and you did not use them. Therefore, I have closed your eyes: I always close the eyes of those who dwell in darkness. For anyone who does not use my gifts is not worthy of my gifts.'

Beware, my friends, of the just punishment of the Earth. Just as light is to be seen by the eyes, so souls are to be loved by your heart. You feel the life of souls in the works of artists, in the looks of inspired people, and in everything that can live. Love the souls wherever you feel them—but forbid your cold mind from asking what they are. Otherwise, the Earth will close

your heart to the souls, and it will become blind to her beauty. And your whole body will become insensitive to the life of your own soul—and soulless like that of others.

This is what turns a human body into a mere eating animal body and a rotting human corpse: that the body loses its ability to feel its own soul. This is how humans die, even if the animal continues to eat: and the only chastity of a dead person is their burial in modest, dead clothes. Let your body live the life of your human soul. Let your body be the feeling, living garment of your soul.

That your soul may laugh in the laughter of your mouth,
That your soul may weep in the tears of your eyes,
That your soul may tremble in the grasp of your hand,
That your soul may shiver in all your nerves, muscles, and flesh.

Thus be your living purity!

From that day on, Charis was less praised but more loved. And she was happier than before.

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Male virtue.

And once again Charis said:
'Now my soul will speak very openly; for those who soiled my words with dirty thoughts have gone away. To you, men, it wishes to speak living words that arise from the deepest abysses of the Earth. Once, women honored in you the warrior, who could hate and fight, but the glory of the warrior has long passed; soldiers today shoot at men they do not hate. Now noblewomen require other kinds of male honor, and they are right to do so.

What now makes a man into a nobleman? Oh men, no longer kill—Life trembles in the deepest abysses of the Earth: for Life, the Earth asks you for manly service. It asks you to bring inspiration to her coldest realms, where her life can only timidly creep. And what is colder than the cold speech of men? And what is more lifeless than the barren mind?

The speech of men is as marble, like a hewn rock, heartless and rough.

Inspire, oh men, inspire Thought! Let your souls chisel into the granite of human speech, until all that shows fragmentation of outdated thinking is crushed into powder, hew away with strong blows all that your soul hates in soulless intellect, until a form is created, a living image, your stony mind, an inspired image of a man's soul.

That kind of work now makes a man into a nobleman: into an artist in marble thoughts, and for that work, the noblewoman will honor him.'

When Charis had spoken thus, she was silent for a while and looked at the

men with love. Then she said again:

'I know you, my confidants; I know that you understand my soul.'

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Yet I say this with care in my heart: beware of false image-makers– for they are craftier than the craftiest woman. Do not trust your soul's eyes alone when you consider their work: also examine it with strong soul-hands. For what is their elegant creation but pliable to the wishes of sickly women and malleable to the warmth of comforting earthly life?

I tell you this with care in my heart: do not fight against them– you will gain no warrior's honor from these female-men. They give you only disgust and sickly nerves and poverty of labor. Wait patiently until their waxen creations melt– truly, the lukewarm tears of sickly women will help dissolve it.'

Then the men thought in their hearts: I wish I had the strength of Charis. She, however, saw their thoughts in their eyes and said:

'My father gave me both female strength and male power, for he was great as a sculptor of Thought. He gave his strong spirit bone and blood and made it his wife. Blessed is the man who becomes a creator of children because he was a creator of himself!'

Female virtue.

And once again Charis said:
'Now I wish to speak to you, women, living words that arise from the deepest abysses of the Earth:

Once, men cherished their adorned doll in you, for pleasure and relaxation, and rest and comfort after completed labor. But now some women also wish to be noble; I know that you are women of noble blood.

What now makes a woman into a noblewoman? Oh women, once you honored the warrior in your consort, and you did well to honor the warrior. But this now is the nobility of your blood: that you inherited warrior's blood from old fighters.

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Now I call upon the noblewoman to become a warrior: she must vanquish something that no man has ever been able to defeat. I see the whole Earth tainted by the poison of a giant serpent; rid me of this serpent, oh women!

I name her by her deceptive name: she calls herself Honor. Her scales glisten with fat and her belly is bloated, for she is well-fed; she has thrived for thousands of years. She greedily consumes the blood of heroes; no hero has ever lived without her drinking from his blood. She also devours the poisonous ink from the pens of well-paid scribes. Most of all, she delights in devouring a loving heart: that is her finest delicacy.

I see long lines of people approaching her green head; two by two they advance, reverent and cautious, for they carry food on silver platters: offerings for the giant serpent. One by one they present their offerings, their blood, or their ink, or their hearts. The serpent greedily swallows it and licks the givers with a lascivious hiss.

Most of the offerers are women; some weep tears of emotion over their offerings—tears, after all, are also a favorite of the serpent: those who mix tears into their offerings receive a special lick. The scribes bring their own poisonous ink; they hold their hats in their hands and bow very politely, for they have great reverence for the serpent of Honor.

And the serpent continues to devour and slurp—oh women, who will kill this serpent for me? Many men have fought her, but she has swallowed them all: even the strongest men become weak at the hissing of Honor. Many women have fought her too, but she has devoured them all: for women were still consolation prizes for men, not warriors.

But now some women also want to be noble; I call to them: to battle, to battle against the serpent of Honor. Do not say that you cannot wield weapons; I tell you:

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You need no weapons—one well-placed kick from a woman′s heel can be deadly. To battle, to battle, crush with your strong female heels the head of the giant serpent. This battle is your womanly virtue; for it, you will be honored by the nobleman.

I have spoken to noblemen and noblewomen. What more shall I say about their marriage? Plebeians pair and produce plebeians, and the whole Earth is filled with common people: common people of high and low ranks. * *

Create a kingly person, oh noble people, a kingly person wise enough to tame the foulest of commoners. Bear, noble mothers, bear a kingly person! Let his eyes pierce hearts and discern hearts of slaves and hearts of the free. Let his hand wield the sword for the liberation of the free and the subjugation of the slaves.

Let his soul glow with love for both the free and the slaves. Bear, noble mothers, bear a kingly person!'

III

In those days, the Christians were preparing to celebrate the festive commemoration of Jesus′ triumph over death.
And Charis said to her young people:
′Let us also celebrate our Easter: the brotherly feast of all who believe in the power of Life.
My heart is drawn to the forests of Vicarino: I want to stay with them for just one day.
Come, let us walk to the woods of Vicarino: there we will celebrate our

Passover.′ -

And together they set out before sunrise: the slumbering morning of a beautiful spring day.
And Charis′ heart overflowed with joy:
′This walk to the silent forests of Vicarino is a sacred pilgrimage to me. There my father created himself a nobleman, there his creative urge called my mother to womanhood, there their creation embrace conceived me.
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Every twig of creative Life trembles there, and the flight of birds is the wings of creative thoughts.′
And when they entered the woods, her eyes wept tears of happiness and her mouth wept words of happiness:
′Dear Earth, who are Mother to us all,
Blessed be your holy womb,
Your Life penetrate us,
Your Will be done in the coldest thoughts as in your
fiercest depths,
To you we owe all the nourishment of our whole being, Forgive that our pride has reproached You, as we forgive
all who offend us,
Teach us to know the futility of alluring ostentation, Deliver us from all delusions of grandeur. -
My dear children, this is how you will pray when people
say: Charis is dead.′

Then her young people became sad and said:
′Do not speak of death now, we wanted to celebrate together the high tide of Life.′

But Charis replied:
′My dear children, the strong Life is not yet roaring with full force in your hearts.
This is how Life lives when it celebrates its strongest victory: it kisses its brother′s kiss on what people call death.
Thus, in the high sunny skies, the royal bee celebrates her wedding - but he who created new life in her womb dies from his act of creation.
And people say: the strongest male bee captured his bride and kissed herself to death.
But I tell you this because I love you: as long as you cannot play with death, and as long as all death becomes your life, you cannot celebrate your supreme Festival of Life.
Strong Life wants strong victory - now death is grim and full of dangers: death wants to conquer Life,
An inspiration for joyful laughter in the grimness of all the dangers of death: that is Life′s highest triumph.
Like a nursing mother is strong Life; the mother laughs at the teasing child, who screams with gluttony,
And she says: little tyrant, just force yourself and beat children′s
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anger my full breasts; What else are you sucking from me than the overripe vital fluid?
It serves you, and is a burden to me, my perfectly healthy life: thus speaks the nursing mother, thus speaks the strong Life to all grim death.′

When Charis had spoken thus, from afar came the faint chimes of a little church where Christians were celebrating their Easter.
And the bell rang softly: ′Alleluia, Life conquers death, Alleluia, Alleluia.′
′Do you hear?′ said Charis, ′they still remember what their Master once taught.
He also spoke words that welled up from the deepest abysses of the Earth - but those words were clouded by the poison of the giant snake.
She drank the Master′s heroic blood and ate his heart and spewed her honorable filth in his words.
Kill me, women, kill me that giant snake. -
My children, the venom of the giant snake has a sweet taste when it spits it out in sacred words.
This is her trick: her poison always tastes of spirituality, and spirituality is sweet as sugar: a food for people with spoiled souls.
A tempting delicacy, bait for false prophets, who preach to weak, spoiled souls.
Beware, beware of false prophets! By this you will recognize them: they praise spiritual things, but they are poor in inspiration.
There is more soul in the bells of their churches than in their piteous preaching tones.
They preach spiritual love, but they cannot love - their words are poison of their love arms and envy: they want to kill your love.
They preach domestic happiness - but tell them: happiness does not want to come in cozy slippers, happiness requires wings to fly.
They preach love of the soul and despise the body - but ask them: what is love of the soul but love of the animate body?′

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- And softly the bell tolled again: Alleluia, Life conquers Death, Alleluia, Alleluia.

″All spirituality, my children, is capricious—and capricious are all beliefs that strive for the most spirituality. Beware of those who say: we know a new spirituality, the old one is worn out. I tell you: they have merely discovered a new whim of capricious, shallow humanity.

But deep, faithful, calm, and powerful is the Life of the Earth. See, the Earth knows no whims. It remains in its path, age after age, and in its womb, its creative power glows unfalteringly.

Its creative power, which vibrates in fields and meadows, sometimes flares up in anger, but without capricious instability, erupts from the mountains.
This is a sign for you that Life truly ripens into new glory:

When the inspired matter is restored to honor, when noble people go to fields and meadows, to sow reverently, to plow reverently, to harvest

reverently,

When he who sows and plows and reaps can feel the joys and sorrows of the Earth and lives in empathy with its own Earthly Life,

When artists mock all pomp and display, and dream of the simple Earth and her unadorned, forgotten people,

When men honor women who dare to set their strong female heel upon the giant serpent,

When women honor men who can preserve and reshape their cold intellect into a hardened image of the man's soul,

Then know that Life itself is truly celebrating a glorious Easter feast."

And gently fading, the last tones of the bell sounded: Alleluia, Life conquers Death, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Then all was quiet. Charis and her young followers remained silent for a long time, for they felt how the Earth wished to speak new, great creation words within them.ers death, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Then everything became quiet. Charis and her young
people also remained silent for a long time, because they felt how the Earth wanted to speak new, great words of creation in them.

* * *

And so they were sunk in the depths of their souls, that they did not perceive how a dark figure came to them,

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A tall old man, draped in black robes and leaning on a walking stick.

Charis was the first to notice him and said, "I recognize that man. My father often spoke of him. He is the gray soul-shepherd of Vicarino: here is a true Christian, with no deceit in him. His heart is uncertain, only certain through the strength of others whom he honors. But he does not pose, saying: I have enough of myself and my God."

The old man slowly approached them. His eyes asked shyly, and his fingers nervously played with the three-cornered hat hanging from his long arm beside his robe.

"Greetings, Reverend," said Charis. "A good angel has brought you to us—you are among happy friends. We left the city to celebrate our *Resurrection feast* here, for the city was too full of bad airs for our *Fresh-Life Festival."*

The old man then smiled and said, "I praise your good taste. Where better to celebrate Easter than in joyful spring air!"

He looked intently at Charis with large, questioning eyes, then suddenly laughed loudly:

"What a fool I've been! I didn't trust you at first. Those strangers in the woods during the highest Christian feast... I thought they must be atheists who don't go to church, who want nothing to do with the dear God and his Easter feast. But now that I see your eyes, I trust you. I have an understanding of eyes; that comes with my white hair. Yes, I can see it in your eyes: you celebrate Easter more beautifully than I do!"

And he sat down very comfortably among Charis and her young followers.

"I see your eyes asking," he continued, "why am I, an old man, in the woods at the height of Easter?"

I will tell you, friends. Once, a holy hermit named Theogenes lived here; he was my faithful friend for many years.

Now they say that he is dead and that he died in a large

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city as an apostate - and I don't know what to think of this.

I would so like to know the truth . I ask all the townspeople
I meet here - but no one has been able to tell me so far.
Oh, if I could hear the truth that he died a saint, I would
close my eyes in joy: I loved him, I love him, my friend Theogenes.'
His words vibrated with truth and Charis was deeply moved. She looked deeply into the old man's eyes and said:
'Yes, truly, a good angel brought you to us. So hear the joyful truth:
Theogenes died holy.
I knew him, I closed his eyes and I prayed with him until his last hour.'
Then the old man jumped up with joy and forgot his walking stick: all his muscles were rejuvenated and full of joyful life.
'Then I will hasten to church to thank my dear Lord. Blessed be the holy day, which taught me that blessed truth.'
And he walked away quickly, waving and laughing from afar.

But when he was out of sight, Charis became very serious, and said to her young ones:
'You will ask me: Is that the truth? Have you told the truth to this old man?
Yes, children, I told the truth, the living truth. A new commandment I give you: the commandment of living truth.
If your truth is not deeper than that of the worldlings, you will not bless the living Earth.
You must speak the truth, says the worldling - but you may speak words without meaning and without love.
But I say to you, whoever speaks words that do not spring from his soul of love is a liar in his heart.
Is this your truth, that the sky is blue and the grass is green? Oh, such

truths also speak the worldlings and even the greatest villains.
I tell you: true words are words born of love and arousing love and happiness - for these words alone express our innermost being.
I tell you, if from a loving soul these words would...
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speak: the sky is green and the grass is blue - those words would be living truth.'

Then Charis thought for a while and resumed:
'I told you very little about God - because he who dares to speak about God rarely tells the truth.
But this is the highest truth that was ever said about God: that God speaks in parables.
The Life of the Earth, my children, is God, and that God speaks in parables.
Parables of God are the sky and the trees and the flowers and everything that our eyes see and our ears hear.
Parables of God are also our words, and whoever feels his words as God's parables, he speaks the truth.
Lies are all empty talk - for they are not felt as God's likeness,
Lie is all judgment - for it is not felt in the likeness of God,
A lie is all the talk about incomprehensible Mystery - because whoever says: I am right, I know the Mystery - he does not feel his words as parables of God.
I give you a new commandment, the commandment of living truth: only speak words that you feel are parables of God.
Speak only words born of love and arousing love and happiness - and let your eyes testify to your truth.
Don't speak much, my children. He who speaks much makes a lot of noise with empty talk - and shouts over the silent language of the parables of God.'

The young people understood Charis and were silent in reverence: their moved hearts listened to the sky and the clouds and the trees.

And their souls tasted living truth.

* * *

Meanwhile it was noon, a warm, clear spring afternoon.
And silence reigned everywhere.
But suddenly Charis' young people saw that their Mistress had turned very pale.
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They were deeply shocked and surrounded her with questions and concerns.

But Charis said, smiling, "Did I not tell you that the strong Life kisses its brother's kiss upon what people call death?"

Then her followers wept and said, ″Mistress, you must not die yet; how could we live the strong life without you?″

But Charis comforted them and said, ″I taught you to love your Mother; what need have I for you now? I sowed you as a seed in the Earth: the care for your growth is now entrusted to her.

Now ask me nothing more, children—no human word must disturb what the Earth still wants to tell me.″

The followers laid Charis on her beloved Earth and knelt silently beside her.

And silence prevailed all around as they watched Charis slowly close her eyes.

But suddenly the Earth trembled beneath their feet, and through all their limbs flowed a warm, tingling joy, and in their hearts, they felt the Earth singing her Easter song.

Allelujah, Allelujah!
It is day, it is day—
What makes the golden sun smile?
‘The people kiss in the night,
But Sun and Earth in full day,
In the bright, clear day of life.’

It is day, it is day—
What makes the Earth’s fair smile?
‘My birth pains are fulfilled again,
O people, I laugh my creation’s laugh,
My honorable, honorable creation’s laugh.’

Nunspeet, Oct. 1906.

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